STATE OF THE PEOPLE

A huge American flag is painted at the top of a cliff near Hailstone, Wasatch County.

It's an old Old Glory.

Midway merchant Guy Coleman says he remembered seeing that flag often when he was a boy. And Mr. Coleman is 70 now.

Not even Sam Lawry can say for sure how long that flag's been in the crags. It's located on land he owns.

Mr. Lawry's been living almost directly under the Stars and Stripes since about 1925. He's been alone most of that time.

When he answered the door at his little wooden home Friday, he was wearing blue-and-white striped overalls, blue shirt, long white beard and a tentative smile.

The teeth he showed are white, even and his own. His youthful eyes were clear and the color of summer skies on a fair day. His nose is a bit bent, but is one that adds strength to his face.

Despite his 73 years, Sam Lawry is a handsome man.

His face has a fierce, yet benign quality that reminds those who behold it of another face. It's a familiar face, too, but remembering just whose is difficult. . . .

Mr. Lawry tells the story of that flag in the rocks this way:

"Before my father and I bought thi[s] land, it was owned by Benny Norris. Th[at] was in the day when soldiers didn't ri[de] in trucks all the time.

"One day some of them marched up a[nd] stopped on the road to rest. Mr. Nor[ris] pointed to that spot on the rock and ask[ed] them to paint the flag there. Three of the[m] did.

"Later, it started to look dim. So m[y] brother Will repainted it. I helped buy t[he] paint.

"After that, a lady from Heber name[d] Miss Isabelle Baum paid crews to repain[t] the flag. After she died, nobody looke[d] after it for a while.

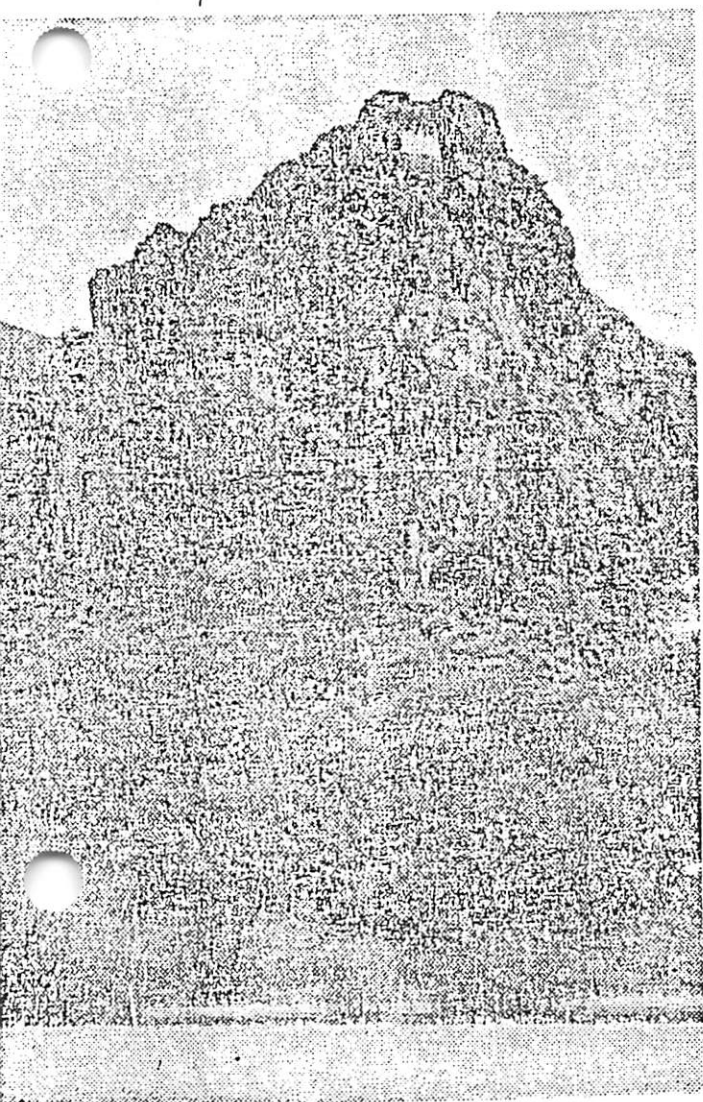
"Then the Veterans of Foreign Wars [in] Heber took an interest in it, and they've bee[n] doing it over every two or three years sinc[e] then. Sure looks fine when they first do it."

The light in Mr. Lawry's eyes as he to[ld] that story once more jogged the memor[y] about the other face that looks like his.

Those striped trousers, the eyes, tha[t] flag, the beard—and yes, even Mr. Lawry's name.

Suddenly, it came.

The man who lives under that flag cr[e]ates a striking impression of the face th[at] appeared on a famous recruiting poster—Uncle Sam's.

Oct 24, 1965

That light spot on the top of the mountain cliff is actually a painted American Flag, long a landmark in Wasatch County.

Proudly We Hail— Flag's Still There

By Shirley Chatwin
Tribune Correspondent

HAILSTONE, Wasatch County — It's a little sad, the "mystery flag of Hailstoe."

And it is a most unusual American Flag.

It has been there — high on a cliff above U.S. 40 some 10 miles north of Heber — since before most area residents can remember, proudly proclaiming the patriotism of its original maker.

Flat Rock

It is painted on a large flat rock on an unnamed foothill peak, and for years was regularly repainted and cared for at the risk of life and limb of the person hanging over the cliff on ropes to do the job.

Residents believe it may have first been painted by Benny Norris, original owner of the property. One local resident, Guy Duke, now 74, recalls that the flag has been there as long as he can remember.

Another long-time resident, Hi Cummings, recalls Mr. Norris telling of the first painting and how the painter injured a rattlesnake sunning on a nearby ledge. It glided away before the painting was finished.

Hang Over

Other later painters of the flag were Harry Mayo and Walt Halliday, who hung over the cliff on ropes for the job. Mrs. Isabelle Bawm took over the duty of keeping the flag freshly painted, hiring men to do the job until her death in 1952.

But now the great rock flag is somewhat sad. Since that time, it has been taken for granted, but uncared for.

It is fading rapidly under the onslaught of sun and weather.

Soon it may disappear as a colorful reminder, a pleasant sight.

Heat Waves

It will no longer seem to flutter in the summer heat waves.

And even though taken for granted by many now, it may soon leave a void — a void in the hearts of many when they casually glance up and find that the flag is not still there.